Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO ALL AFRICAN DIPLOMATIC POSTS

AMCONSUL LUBUMBASHI

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY LISBON

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

USICA WASHDC

USINT HAVANA

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMCONSUL BUKAVU

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY BONN

USMISSION USNATO

XMT AMEMBASSY ANTANARIVO

AMEMBASSY BAMAKO

AMEMBASSY BISSAU

AMEMBASSY CONAKRY

AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY FREETOWN

AMEMBASSY GABORONE

AMEMBASSY LOME

AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE

AMEMBASSY LILONGWE

AMEMBASSY MBABANE

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AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

AMEMBASSY NIAMEY

AMEMBASSY NDJAMENA

AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SOPN

SUBJECT: DEPARTMENT OF STATE NOON BRIEFING, JUNE 2, 1978

FOLLOWING IS AN UNOFFICIAL, UNCORRECTED EXCERPT FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE PRESS BRIEFING. IF NECESSARY THE OFFICIAL VERSION WILL FOLLOW.

Q: I HAVE A TWO-PART QUESTION ON AFRICA. ONE, THE REPORTS ABOUT (A) AMERICANS FLYING THE BELGIANS AND FRENCH OUT; (B) ABOUT SAUDI ARABIA SEEKING U.S. PERMISSION TO GIVE ARMS TO ZAIRE, AND (C), THE AMERICAN MILITARY MISSION GOING TO SOMALIA.

A: LET ME TAKE IT AS WE GO. AT THE BEGINNING OF THE SHABA CRISIS, WE DID UNDERTAKE TO AIRLIFT FRENCH EQUIPMENT

TO SHABA. WE HAVE SUBSEQUENTLY AGREED IN PRINCIPLE TO A FRENCH REQUEST TO RETURN THE MEN AND MATERIEL THAT WE CARRIED INTO ZAIRE, SUBJECT TO FURTHER CONSULTATIONS WITH THE FRENCH ON THE DETAILS AND THE TIMING.

WE HAVE ALSO BEEN APPROACHED REGARDING THE POSSIBLE LIFT IN THE SAME OPERATION OF AFRICAN FORCES TO SHABA. IN UNCLASSIFIED

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OTHER WORDS, A REPLACEMENT FACTOR TO SOME DEGREE.

THIS IS AN ASPECT, A MATTER ABOUT WHICH WE ARE CURRENTLY SEEKING FURTHER DETAILS.

BEFORE ANY ACTION IS TAKEN ON SUCH AN OPERATION, WE WILL, OF COURSE, WISH TO CONSULT WITH THE CONGRESS AND THE AFRICAN GOVERNMENTS INVOLVED.

Q: WHO APPROACHED YOU?

A: I WOULD SAY THAT THE ISSUE HAS BEEN DISCUSSED WITH A NUMBER -- AFRICAN AND EUROPEAN.

Q: THE ISSUE OF FLYING IN AFRICAN FORCES, I GUESS THAT DEPENDS ON THE MONDAY MEETING IN PARIS. IT IS LINKED WITH THAT. ISN'T IT?

A: AS I HAVE SAID, THE PROBLEMS IN ZAIRE ARE GOING TO BE ADDRESSED DURING THE TALKS IN PARIS NEXT MONDAY, AND THEREFORE I WOULD ANTICIPATE THAT THE FRENCH MIGHT DISCUSS THIS SUBJECT ... IN FACT DISCUSS THE SUBJECT WITH UNDER SECRETARY NEWSOM DURING THE VISIT. I CAN'T BE MUCH MORE SPECIFIC ABOUT IT BECAUSE WE HAVE NOT EXPLORED ALL THE OPTIONS AND DETAILS OF THE LATTER HALF OF THIS TWO-PART SERIES.

Q: BUT DIDN'T YOU TAKE THAT A STEP FURTHER, AS I RECALL EARLIER THIS WEEK IN A SOMEWHAT MORE CHAOTIC CIRCUMSTANCES, WHEN YOU SAID THAT IF THIS KIND OF REQUEST WAS MADE AND IF THE CIRCUMSTANCES WERE AGREED AND CAREFULLY DELINEATED.

A: NO, I AM NOT BACKING AWAY FROM THAT AT ALL. I AM JUST TRYING TO KEEP US FROM SUGGESTING THAT WE HAVE THE FORCES POISED FOR FLIGHT ON THE AFRICAN SIDE. IT IS UNCLASSIFIED

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JUST NOT THE CASE, AS I UNDERSTAND IT.

Q: I WANT TO GO BACK TO WHAT HENRY BRADSHER IS PUSHING AND IS GETTING KIND OF GLOSSED OVER.

YOU SAY THIS HAS BEEN SUGGESTED TO YOU, AND THEN YOU ALSO SAY YOU ARE GOING TO CONSULT WITH THE AFRICAN COUNTRIES. ARE YOU CONSULTING WITH THE SAME COUNTRY THAT SUGGESTED IT?

A: NO. AS A MATTER OF FACT, WE HAVE BEEN CONSULTING AND ARE CONSULTING ON THIS GENERAL QUESTION WITH SOME AFRICAN COUNTRIES AS WELL AS EUROPEAN.

Q: WELL, THIS IS A VERY SENSITIVE MATTER, AS WE ALL

KNOW. IS THIS AN AMERICAN IDEA? HAVE WE, OF OUR OWN VIOLITION, DECIDED IT WOULD BE A GOOD THING TO GET INTO THIS?

A: WE, IN FACT, DID NOT INITIATE THE IDEA. WE ARE ENTERTAINING IT.

Q: WAS THE IDEA INITIATED BY THE HOST COUNTRY, ZAIRE?

A: NO. THE POINT HERE IS THAT I AM NOT PREPARED TO SAY WHERE THE IDEA ORIGINATED. IT IS ONE WHICH IS ACTIVELY UNDER CONSIDERATION IN A NUMBER OF QUARTERS.

Q: ALL RIGHT. CAN YOU SAY WHETHER IT ORIGINATED IN BOTH AFRICA AND AMONG THE WESTERN EUROPEANS, AND UNDER CONSIDERATION IN BOTH QUARTERS, OR CAN YOU JUST SEPARATE THE TWO, EUROPE AND AFRICA? UNCLASSIFIED

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A: IT IS UNDER CONSIDERATION IN BOTH PLACES. AGAIN, AS TO THE ORIGINATION OF THE IDEA. ONE REASON IS, TO BE QUITE FRANK, I AM SOMEWHAT VAGUE AS TO WHERE THE GERM CAME FROM. I THINK YOU OUGHT TO REMEMBER IN THIS

REGARD THAT THERE WAS AN AFRICAN PRESENCE IN THE LAST SHABA CRISIS. SHABA ONE. AND IT WOULD NOT BE A NEW THING FOR THIS TO OCCUR.

Q: BUT THERE IS A LARGE LEGAL DIFFERENCE BETWEEN RESPONDING TO A REQUEST FROM THE HOST COUNTRY AND RESPONDING TO A FRENCH FOREIGN POLICY TO BRING US BACK INTO AFRICA.

NOW, IS IT FRENCH POLICY, ZAIRIAN POLICY, OR AMERICAN POLICY?

A: IN ANY CASE, SUCH AN OPERATION WOULD BE DEPENDENT UPON THE ZAIRIAN DESIRE FOR SUCH AN OPERATION? I MEAN. THAT IS JUST A GIVEN.

ALL RIGHT, WHERE WERE WE?

Q: SAUDI ARMS TO ZAIRE AND SOMALIA.

A: WE HAVE NOT DISCUSSED WITH SAUDI ARABIA, OR TO TAKE IN WHAT YOU DIDN'T ASK ME, WHICH IS IRAN, THE POSSIBILITY THAT ARMS OF U.S. ORIGIN WOULD BE SUPPLIED TO ANY INTERNATIONAL FORCE OR PAN-AFRICAN FORCE IN THIS REGARD.

Q: WOULD YOU AGREE TO IT IF THEY -- ?

A: WAIT A MINUTE. I DON'T KNOW. YOU HAVE GOT TO TAKE IT ONE STEP AT A TIME. WE HAVE NOT YET HAD THAT DISCUSSION.

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Q: HAVE THE FRENCH DISCUSSED IT WITH THEM?

A: I AM SAYING WE HAVE NOT DISCUSSED THE POSSIBILITY WITH THEM, THE USE OF U.S. ORIGIN ARMS FOR SUCH A PAN-AFRICAN FORCE.

Q: HAVE THEY ASKED YOU TO DISCUSS IT?

A: WAIT A MINUTE. THAT WOULD IMPLY THAT STARTS A DISCUSSION. I ALSO WOULD NOT WANT TO SAY TO YOU THAT WE HAVE NOT DISCUSSED IT, BECAUSE WE HAVE, THE GENERAL CONCERNS THAT THE SAUDIS HAVE ABOUT EVENTS IN VARIOUS PARTS OF AFRICA. BUT THAT IS A DIFFERENT QUESTION.

Q: HAVE WE DISCUSSED THIS ISSUE WITH THE FRENCH, OR HAVE THE FRENCH DISCUSSED THIS ISSUE WITH THE SAUDIS AND THE IRANIANS?

A: I DON'T KNOW. I LITERALLY AM NOT PREPARED ON THAT

QUESTION. THE TRANSFER OF U.S. ORIGIN ARMS?

Q: YES.

A: LET ME SAY, IN ANY CASE, ON THIS, AS YOU KNOW BETTER THAN I DO, SUCH A TRANSFER WOULD NOT BE A MATTER THAT WE COULD UNDERTAKE ON OUR OWN WITHOUT AT LEAST CONSULTING AND WOULD NOT WITHOUT CONSULTING WITH CONGRESS.

Q: THEREFORE, WOULD THERE BE ANY POLICY DIFFERENCE?
ASSUMING YOU WERE GOING TO GET THE APPROVAL OF CONGRESS,
APPROVAL FOR A TRANSFER TO A THIRD COUNTRY, WHAT IS
THE POLICY DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SUPPLYING THE ARMS FOR
SUCH A FORCE OURSELVES RATHER THAN GOING THROUGH THE
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CROOKED PAIN OF --

A: QUITE FRANKLY, THERE ARE A NUMBER OF POSSIBILITIES WHICH ARE YET TO BE FULLY DISCUSSED. THE PROBLEM IS, LIKE MOST THINGS, WE HAVE NOT YET EMERGED FULL-BLOWN FROM ANYBODY'S BROW WITH A FULL PROGRAM. WE ARE DISCUSSING POSSIBILITIES. AND THIS IS WHAT WE ARE STILL DOING, DISCUSSING THE POSSIBILITIES. WOULD THAT THE GOVERNMENT WERE AS COHERENT AS THE QUESTIONS SOMETIMES APPLY.

Q: WILL THIS CONSIDERATION OF STRONGER U.S. ACTION IN

AFRICA IMPACT ON THE SALT TALKS THAT YOU SAY ARE NOT FROZEN NOW?

A: THAT IS CORRECT. IT WILL NOT.

Q: AND SOMALIA?

A: I CAN CONFIRM THAT IN THE COURSE OF INTENSIVE EXCHANGES OVER THE PAST SEVERAL MONTHS, THE SOMALI GOVERNMENT HAS PROVIDED US WITH ASSURANCES THAT IT WILL NOT USE FORCE AGAINST ANY OTHER COUNTRY EXCEPT IN DEFENSE OF ITS OWN INTERNATIONALLY RECOGNIZED TERRITORY.

THIS WAS IN RESPONSE TO PRESIDENT CARTER'S REQUEST THAT AS A CONDITION FOR EXPANDED U.S. AID, THE SOMALI GOVERNMENT UNDERTAKE TO RESPECT ITS NEIGHBOR'S BORDERS AND TERRITORY IN THE FUTURE.

ON THE QUESTION OF A MILITARY SURVEY MISSION, IT IS COMMON PRACTICE FOR US TO HAVE THE RESULTS OF A MILITARY SURVEY TEAM BEFORE PROVIDING ARMS TO ANOTHER COUNTRY.

ON THAT, THE DETAILS OF SUCH A SURVEY MISSION ARE STILL

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BEING DISCUSSED WITH THE SOMALI GOVERNMENT AND WE THEREFORE WILL NOT BE IN ANY POSITION TO COMMENT ON THE POSSIBLE SUPPLY OF ANY SPECIFIC ITEMS PENDING THE VISIT OF THE TEAM AND ITS REPORT.

ANY ACTUAL MILITARY SALES TO SOMALIA WOULD REQUIRE A PRIOR PRESIDENTIAL DETERMINATION MAKING SOMALIA ELIGIBLE FOR SUCH SALES.

WE HAVE KEPT APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES INFORMED OF DEVELOPMENTS IN OUR RELATIONS WITH SOMALIA, BUT WE HAVE NOT MADE ANY DECISIONS, OR TAKEN ANY ACTIONS AS YET, ON MILITARY SUPPLY WHICH WOULD INVOLVE FORMAL CONGRESSIONAL CONSULTATIONS.

AGAIN, OBVIOUSLY, THEY WOULD BE UNDERTAKEN DEPENDING ON THE FINDING OF THE TEAM. I DON'T HAVE A DATE FOR THE TEAM GOING OUT.

Q: MOST ARTICLES TALK OF 15 MILLION DOLLARS.

A: AGAIN, I JUST THINK IT IS PREMATURE, PENDING THAT TEAM, TO BE THAT SPECIFIC ABOUT MONEY OR POSSIBLE ITEMS.

Q: THE SENDING OF A TEAM DOESN'T MEAN, THEN, IN PRINCIPLE THAT A DECISION HAS BEEN MADE?

A: NO. IT WOULD HAVE TO COME BACK AND REPORT. A PRESIDENTIAL DETERMINATION STILL HAS TO BE MADE.

Q: BUT GIVEN THEIR ASSURANCE, THERE SEEMS TO BE NO IMPEDIMENT TO A RESUMPTION OF MILITARY SALES, IS THAT RIGHT?

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A: CERTAINLY, THAT ASSURANCE WAS GIVEN VERY SPECIFICALLY, AND THAT WAS A CONDITION THAT THE PRESIDENT SET.

Q: IN ANSWER TO MY QUESTION, GIVEN THAT ASSURANCE, THERE APPEARS TO BE NO IMPEDIMENT TO THE RESUMPTION OF MILITARY SALES.

A: MY PROBLEM WITH ANSWERING THE QUESTION AS YOU PHRASE IT IS THAT PENDING THE DETERMINATION, I'M NOT GOING TO SAY WHETHER THERE IS AN IMPEDIMENT OR NOT.

Q: IS THERE AN ASSURANCE THAT THEY WILL NOT PROVIDE ASSISTANCE TO THE INDEPENDENT FORCES IN THE OGADEN?

A: THE EXACT FORM THAT THE ASSURANCE TAKES I DO NOT HAVE IN FRONT OF ME, AND THEREFORE, I'M A LITTLE RELUCTANT TO SAY EXACTLY HOW IT'S PHRASED. IT IS THAT IT WILL NOT USE FORCE AGAINST ANY OTHER COUNTRY EXCEPT IN DEFENSE OF ITS OWN BORDERS

Q: CAN YOU MAKE IT AVAILABLE?

A: I DOUBT IT.

Q: COULD YOU ALSO BE MORE PRECISE ABOUT THE CHRONOLOGY OF THIS -- WHEN THIS ASSURANCE CAME FROM THE SOMALIS?

A: WITHIN THE LAST COUPLE OF MONTHS.

Q: MORE PRECISE THAN THAT. AS I REMEMBER, THE DISCUSSION OF SUPPLYING THEM DEFENSIVE ARMS AROSE AS SOON AS THE INVADING FORCE WAS DEFEATED AND WITHDREW.

A: YES.

Q: AND THAT, INDEED, GOES BACK A COUPLE OF MONTHS. UNCLASSIFIED

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A: YES. THERE HAVE BEEN LONG NEGOTIATIONS.

Q: COULD YOU GIVE US A MORE PRECISE IDEA OF WHEN THE DISCUSSIONS GOT TO THE POINT WHERE IT WAS DECIDED TO SEND A SURVEY TEAM?

A: I'LL SEE. LET ME SEE IF I CAN TAKE THE QUESTIONS AS FOLLOWS: AT WHAT POINT DID WE IN FACT GET THIS KIND OF SPECIFIC ASSURANCE? SECOND, DOES THE SPECIFIC ASSURANCE DEAL WITH THE QUESTION OF THE SUPPLY OF ASSISTANCE TO FORCES DOING FIGHTING ELSEWHERE RATHER THAN THE USE OF FORCES BY YOUR OWN FORCES ACROSS TERRITORIES? THIRD, DO WE HAVE SOME NOTION OF WHEN OUR MILITARY SURVEY TEAM WILL BE GOING FORTH? AND FORTH, A BETTER SENSE OF THE CHRONOLOGY OF THE WHOLE THING SINCE THE WITHDRAWAL BY THE REGULAR FORCES OF SOMALIA FROM THE OGADEN.

Q: AND FIFTH, IS IT EXPLICIT THAT SOMALIA RECOGNIZES THE BORDER? IN OTHER WORDS HOW WAS IT ACTUALLY MADE, A NOTE FROM PRESIDENT TO PRESIDENT?

A: ALL RIGHT. I'M TAKING THESE QUESTIONS, AS WE ALL KNOW, AT LEAST ON SOME OF THIS MATTER, THERE MAY BE SOME RELUCTANCE TO GO INTO SPECIFICS OF HOW A DIPLOMATIC EXCHANGE TAKES PLACE.

Q: COULD I ADD A COUPLE MORE MAYBE, HOW THIS IS GOING DOWN

IN ETHIOPIA AND WHOSE IDEA WAS THIS, SAUDI ARABIA'S OR THE UNITED STATES'?

A: IT'S BEEN OURS.

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Q: THIS IS OUR IDEA TO ARM SOMALIA? IT WASN'T AT THE URGING OR AT LEAST THE SUGGESTION OF THE FRIENDLY ARAB AND EUROPEAN COUNTRIES, AS THE PRESS SAYS?

A: THE PRESIDENT -- THE DECISION WAS TAKEN IN PRINCIPLE A LONG TIME AGO, PRIOR TO THE ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT OF THE SOMALI FORCES IN THAT AREA BY THE PRESIDENT. IT WAS, AS YOU KNOW, COUNTERED AT THE TIME OF THE OPEN INVASION OF THE OGADEN, AND THE PRESIDENT HAS SINCE -- WE HAVE MADE IT PRETTY CLEAR, AS HE SAID IN THE PRESS CONFERENCE -- AND WE HAVE MADE IT CLEAR ELSEWHERE -- THIS IS SOMETHING THAT WE ARE INTERESTED IN.

Q: BUT THERE ARE SAUDI CONCERNS?

A: OF COURSE, THERE ARE MORE THAN SAUDI? LET ME SAY THAT CONCERNS THAT HAVE BEEN EXPRESSED TO US BY A NUMBER OF COUNTRIES ABOUT SOVIET PENETRATION IN THE AREA, AND THE SAUDIS ARE VERY EXPLICIT ON THAT, SO ARE A NUMBER OF OTHER PEOPLE IN THAT AREA. THE EGYPTIANS.

Q: ARE WE WILLING NOW TO APPROVE ALSO THIRD-COUNTRY TRANSFERS TO SOMALIA?

A: AGAIN, I DON'T HAVE A QUESTION HAVING ARISEN ON THE QUESTION OF THIRD-COUNTRY TRANSFERS. I'LL JUST HAVE TO TAKE IT.

Q: HAVE YOU SEEN THIS REPORT OF SOUTH AFRICA DISMANTLING ITS STRUCTURES IN THE KALAHARI DESERT?

A: I SAW THAT STORY AND I DIDN'T GET GUIDANCE IN TIME TO DEAL WITH IT. I'M GOING TO HAVE TO TAKE THAT ONE. IT'S PROBABLY AN INTELLIGENCE MATTER.

Q: GOING BACK TO THE TRANSFER OF U.S. ARMS TO THE PEOPLE UNCLASSIFIED

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IN ZAIRE THROUGH SAUDI ARABIA OR IRAN OR SOME THIRD PARTY WHICH HAS BEEN GIVEN THE U.S. ARMS, YOU SAID THE UNITED STATES CAN'T, OR THIS ADMINISTRATION CAN'T AND WON'T APPROVE SUCH A TRANSFER WITHOUT CONSULTING CONGRESS.

A: YES.

Q: ZAIRE, NOT SOMALIA.

A: YES.

Q: YOU KNOW, POLICIES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE.

A: THAT'S RIGHT. I'M ANNOUNCING POLICY RIGHT NOW. WE WILL CONSULT BEFORE WE APPROVE THE TRANSFER OF ARMS. CHRISTOPHER

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